

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXIV.—No. 28

SUNDAY, JULY 12, 1914

PRICE TWOPENCE

Perhaps the great triumph of all moral writings, including sermons, is that at least they have produced some sweet and innocent sleep.—ARTHUR HELPS.

Providence.

THEOLOGICALLY providence signifies God as exercising his universal care and control. Very striking are the words in which the Gospel Jesus describes it: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father; but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Mat. x. 29-31). Mr. K. L. Parry, B. Sc., informs us that "this is one of the most precious sayings in all the Scriptures. It is so precious that we are almost afraid to look at it, lest it should vanish." Its preciousness consists in the comfort it ministers to those who are in trouble and sorrow. To us, however, the saying presents no intelligible meaning whatever. We fail to realise how it can benefit or comfort anybody to believe that God is with every falling sparrow and has numbered the very hairs of our head. Even on the assumption that this is true of him it is difficult to perceive how the knowledge of it can be a source of consolation to the afflicted. Unless the Divine presence prevents the sparrow from falling and rides mankind of all its sufferings, what is the use of it? Of what service to the world is a God who never acts? Or, to put the case differently, if God exists, is it not he who causes the sparrows to fall? Is he not to be held responsible for all the evils that darken life? Now, Mr. Parry, in a sermon in the *Christian World Pulpit* for July 1, candidly admits that Nature teems with ugly facts for which he is unable to account:—

"We read in the rocks the record of great upheavals; we hear of cosmic collisions; we witness the rise and fall of mighty empires, Greece and Rome, Egypt and Babylon; we see temples left derelict, the monuments of ancient religions, and we know what all this means, we know what it has cost in blood; horrid visions rise before us of wars among the beasts, of battles royal in ancient forests; we know what it all represents in terms of mortal agony and suffering, we know because this is a war from which there is no discharge, and we witness all around us this same struggle and strife."

With those painful facts in mind, Mr. Parry exclaims, "Such is Nature. So has its Maker ordained." What a dismal confession! What a humiliating description of the Creator. Nature is "red in tooth and claw with ravine" by the decree of the Almighty. He not only permits, but ordains all the evils under which creation groans. And yet this God, who thus ordains, is called the Father, whose love knows no bounds, whose mercy endureth for ever, and who "comes quickly in response to the feeblest cry of his creatures." "So has its Maker ordained." He has ordained that the spider should catch and devour the fly in its web. Our loving Heavenly Father has ordained that the eagle should sweep down from the high rock and snatch away the bleating lamb from its mother's side. Mr. Parry has the temerity to declare that "this is God's world, that the least of his creatures is precious in his sight," and that "we are made and given life because

the Creator has a father's heart, and rejoices in his children."

Without a moment's hesitation, we repudiate the doctrine of Divine providence, because all the facts of life belie it. There is absolutely nothing to show that this world is under the care of a tender-hearted and loving father. Indeed, Christian ministers themselves often describe this world as bristling with imperfections, inequalities, disharmonies, and disorders, a fact upon which they base an argument for immortality. Even they who are proud to be known as the Lord's people cannot hide from themselves the fact they enjoy no immunities, but are as dependent upon their own faculties as all others. The old belief that the Lord is mindful of his own gets discredited at every turn in life. Nature recognises no distinction between the godly and the ungodly, but insists upon treating all alike. Mr. Parry asserts that "the Gospel is this, that God is to be trusted"; but everybody is aware that, as a matter of fact, God is never trusted. Even the most pious people on earth trust themselves. Trust in God is a sentiment which nobody ever translates into practice. It is a thing to talk and sing and pray about, particularly in church on Sundays. "Trust thyself," says Emerson; "every heart vibrates to that iron string." It is a lying Gospel Mr. Parry preaches, a Gospel which nobody ever dreams of putting to the test of practice. Jesus taught that "God could be trusted to provide for and protect those who made his purpose their supreme concern"; but there is no case on record in which it could be proved that God did provide for and protect such people. Super-human provision and protection are never experienced, as history abundantly testifies.

"Providence" is a term which some people are in the habit of using in a thoughtless, irresponsible manner. When a man says, "By the good providence of God I was enabled to do so-and-so," he only means that circumstances were favorable, or that luck was on his side. He certainly does not believe that the Divine Being interposed miraculously on his behalf. There are others, however, who imagine that God is specially interested in them, and constantly takes their affairs into his own hands. A well-known clergyman had arranged to sail on the ill-fated *Titanic*; but at the last moment the Lord rendered it impossible for him to go by inflicting a slight illness on his wife. This was rather rough on the lady, and an illustration of the overweening conceit of the man, while it represents God as guilty of the wickedest behavior. If the clergyman was right about his own escape, then the *Titanic* disaster was an act of God, as every such catastrophe must be. We are therefore irresistibly driven to the conclusion that Atheism is the only rational position, every form of Theism being flatly contradicted by the facts of history.

Mr. Parry acknowledges his inability to define God's purpose in the Universe. He is convinced that he has a purpose, and that he is steadily fulfilling it in his own wise but mysterious way; and our object ought to be to co-operate with him in that fulfilment. But if we do not know what God's purpose is, how on earth can we co-operate with him in its prosecution? Take this:—

"We are here to do God's will, let the consequences be what they will. We are in this valley of earth, shut

in on every side by impenetrable mountains, and here we are to fight a battle of which we cannot know the ultimate issue. God alone knows his inscrutable purpose. His thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways."

How can we do God's will when we do not know what it is? How can we co-operate with him in an inscrutable purpose? We are told that the light shineth in the darkness, and yet that the darkness abides. The darkness abides; we are compassed about by mystery; and yet, though the darkness abides, "we can see the face of God, and know when he is pleased with us and when he is angry." Only in the pulpit is such sheer nonsense tolerated at this time of day. On the lecture-platform it would be laughed to scorn. We dismiss both God and his purpose, and substitute self-reliance. We do not know why we are here. It is possible that in the scheme of things our existence serves no purpose whatever. All we know is that, being here, we can make our lives purposeful by devoting them to the service of the race. Our work, the only work known to us, is to act as our own providence and, as far as possible, the providence of our neighbors. As Emerson says, "a man is relieved and gay when he has put his heart into his work and done his best." He needs no supernatural interference or succor, no providential intervention from beyond the clouds, but derives all requisite encouragement or inspiration from the sense of kinship and solidarity; and in proportion as his life becomes natural, it becomes also efficient.

J. T. LLOYD.

Do We Survive Death?—II.

(Continued from p. 418.)

WHAT objections are there to the theory that mental phenomena stand to the brain and nervous system in the relation of function to organ? There is no objection to it on any ground of fact, because that is the relation presented to us all, and it is assumed on all hands. We do not know "mind" apart from body, but we do know "body" apart from "mind." The only objection is one of theory; or, rather, the objection is based upon the necessities of a theory of immortality which is doomed if the mechanistic view be accepted as true. And, curiously enough, the one who has accepted a theory of a future life in the complete absence of evidence is found demanding the most rigorous demonstration of every step of the mechanistic argument before he will surrender his own totally unsupported belief. Manifesting a credulity almost without limits in the one direction, he rushes to the extreme of scepticism the moment the belief based upon that credulity is assailed.

It is argued that nervous action and consciousness are incommensurables—that is, they are two things having nothing in common; and we cannot therefore see how the one becomes "transformed" into the other. These objectors seldom pause to consider that, if this argument is given its face value, it is not only fatal to the mechanistic theory of the relations of body and mind; it is equally fatal to any theory that may be proposed. If we reject the theory that "mind" is the function of an organ on the ground that we cannot see how they are connected, we cannot adopt the bedlam-like policy of immediately assuming that nervous action, which it is admitted always accompanies mental phenomena, is due to the activity of an unknown substance which we call mind. This is denying a connection in one breath, and asserting it in the next. If there is really an unbridgable gulf between the molecular activity of the brain and consciousness, the gulf remains from whichever side we contemplate the problem. If the gap lies with the facts, and not with our knowledge of the facts only, we may assume a sort of pre-established harmony, such as one may see established between a phonograph and a cinematograph display; but nothing else is pos-

sible. On any other line the Spiritualist, in slaughtering the Materialist, commits suicide himself.

The difficulty is largely due to not bearing clearly in mind what is the scientific sense of "function." Let us take, for illustration, the case of a muscle, about which there is no dispute. The prime function of a muscle is contractility. The constituent parts of a muscle are cells and cell-fibres. If we take these cells singly, they exhibit the normal irritability of cells in general. It is their combination, their organisation, their development of specific qualities in the course of evolution, that gives the function of contractility. It is the special combination of specially developed cells that gives us the phenomena of muscular action. The "function" in this case, it is admitted, is the expression of the activity of the muscle. We cannot separate the two; and if we ask *why* the molecular movements of certain cells should result in the flexing of a muscle, we can only reply that the one thing invariably accompanies the other. And this reply is accepted as quite satisfactory. No one denies that contractility is the function of a specially organised structure.

From a biological point of view, therefore, a "function" may be defined as the activity of an organ or of an assemblage of organs. This definition holds good whether we are dealing with muscle and contractility, brain and thought, or an organism and life. We have the structure, and we have certain functions which are the expression of its activity. We do not know that *any* function is more than this; and it must be for those who make such an assertion to prove it.

Here a further consideration must be borne in mind. Sir Oliver Lodge, and Professor Haldane in his *Mechanism and Personality*, asserts that on the mechanistic theory life and consciousness becomes nothing more than the physics and chemistry of the nervous system. As put, the expression is misleading. The function of an organ or of an organism is more than can ever be discovered by any analysis of the physical or chemical nature of their constituent parts. No analysis of a compound will give the properties of a compound. That is the most elementary of axioms in chemistry. A whole exhibits all the properties of its parts *plus* the qualities due to their combination. And it is this *plus* that Spiritualists and Vitalists conveniently overlook. Naturally, therefore, an analysis of an organic structure does not give, and cannot give, all that is manifested by the structure. And except for its greater complexity, the difficulty of seeing how brain action gives rise to thought is no greater than that of seeing how any function is related to its organ. In any case, we can only show that, given a particular structure and conditions, a certain activity ensues. In a general sense, our knowledge here, although of a less precise character than in other directions, is in substantial agreement with all that we know concerning the relation of function to organ.

Much of the confusion existing is due to the way in which the question is often stated. People look for the undiscoverable, and complain that it cannot be found. When they ask how neural motion becomes a sensation, or how nervous action becomes thought, two things are separated that are in fact inseparable. Molecular motion does not become thought. Molecular motion remains molecular motion, and cannot become anything else. The famous statement that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile is true only in the sense that as we find no bile in the absence of a liver, so we find no thought in the absence of a brain. "Production" carries with it the notion of separateness, and it is here that the confusion arises.

It is said, for example, that in any succession of nervous motions there is no room for the introduction of thought or consciousness. When, for instance, I tread with a bare foot upon a sharp nail, there results a complete chain of ingoing and outgoing physical changes that result in the removal of

my foot. And it is said that there is no point in the chain of physical sequences at which consciousness may be introduced. The sequence is complete in its absence. Yet the presence of consciousness is denied by none. In addition to the physical changes, there is a sensation. We have at the beginning a physical shock; we follow this through a number of stages, and there emerges something quite different in character—a sensation. And the triumphant conclusion is that there can be no genuine organic connection between the two.

Certainly not, if we are observing two different facts. But is this so? Are we observing two distinct facts, or two aspects of the same fact? If the latter, the case becomes greatly simplified, and we have no longer to ask how one thing becomes transformed into another thing; but what are the conditions under which certain phenomena occur? And the cardinal fact here is, that what is viewed under one set of conditions as molecular motion is, viewed another set of conditions, feeling or thought. We may describe the same thing from either the subjective or from the objective side. In the one case we describe a phenomenon in terms of sensation, in the other in terms of matter and motion. We may, for example, describe a sensation of light from the physical side as so many nervous shocks, or we may describe it in terms of sensation, without considering the physical aspect at all. But it is the same thing all along. The distinction arises in looking at the same phenomenon now from the objective, now from the subjective, point of view. The confusion results from not always clearly bearing in mind that we are all the time observing the same fact, or set of facts, under different conditions.

The folly of asserting that if the mechanistic theory be true there should be nothing but physics and chemistry, is thus clear. The subjective aspect is as real as the objective. We do not see how motion produces mind, and we do not see how mind produces motion, because we are in each case looking for the impossible. But we can see how the same thing, under different conditions, will present quite different aspects. The psychic fact is not something that is produced, any more than H²O produces water. Water is H²O under special conditions, and in the same way the psychic fact is the objective fact presented under different conditions. Two things have been separated in thought that are inseparable in fact, and having done so, we treat them as independent existences, and at once fall to speculating as to what can be the connection between them?

Finally, it must be borne in mind that the neurological theory is the only one on behalf of which anything like scientific evidence can be offered. It cannot, of course, answer every difficulty that presents itself, but it is the only theory that explains, even in a general way, known phenomena by an appeal to verifiable data. Objections to it are based chiefly upon the incompleteness of our knowledge, an incompleteness not at all surprising when one remembers how brief is the period during which science has possessed the tools essential to the working of the problem. But during that period it has shown very clearly the useless nature of a soul theory. So far as positive science is concerned that is as dead as a doornail. This is admitted by a writer of the standing of Professor McDougal, who says:—

"It is a matter of common knowledge that science has given its verdict against the soul, has declared that the soul, as a thing, or being, or substance, or mode of existence, or activity, different from, distinguishable from, or in any sense or degree independent of, the body is a mere survival from primitive culture, one of the many relics of savage superstition that obstinately persist among us in defiance of the clear teachings of modern science. The greater part of the philosophies also, mainly owing to the influence of the natural sciences, has arrived at the same conclusion. In short, it cannot be denied that, as William James told us at Oxford three years ago, 'Souls are out of fashion.'"

This summary of the present position of science

loses some of its force from the writers own attempt to revive the "soul theory."

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

The Word of God.—III.

An Open Letter to the

MINISTERS OF ALL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

LET me take, for instance, a volume like *Lux Mundi*, edited by Bishop Gore. This clergyman allows that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, who is only responsible for the Ten Commandments; he also allows that David did not write the Psalms, nor Solomon the Proverbs; and that Jonah and Daniel are "dramatic compositions," and not history; although, as a matter of fact, Jesus Christ referred to both Jonah and Daniel as records of actual occurrences. But the admissions of Bishop Gore are outdone by those of the late Canon Driver, in his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*. According to this clergyman, the book of Genesis was written hundreds of years after the time of Moses, by more than one hand; Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers are just as modern; while Deuteronomy was written some time between Isaiah and Jeremiah. The Hexateuch—that is, the Pentateuch and Joshua—was the work of nameless Jewish scribes; and the whole of the Priestly Code, or Law of Moses, belongs "approximately to the period of the Babylonian captivity."

This view of the Pentateuch was advocated by Thomas Paine, and unanimously opposed by the Churches. Dean Graves, Bishop Watson, Dr. Marsh, and a host of other ministers, stood up for its Mosaic origin; and scores of men and women were sent to gaol for selling books in which the opposite was maintained. However, the case is now altered; Canon Driver could only urge that the Jewish priests, who made laws and ascribed them to Moses, should not be accused of the crime of "forgery," as they were only conforming to "the literary usages" of their age and nation; though, for my part, I hold with Mr. Gladstone, that, if the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, but by Jewish priests and scribes, eight hundred years after his time, both the Jewish and the Christian worlds have been made the victims of "a heartless imposture."

Let us take the rest of Canon Driver's admissions as to the Old Testament books. David did not write the Psalms, which "set before us the experience of many men, and of many ages of the national life." Proverbs was "formed gradually," and not written by Solomon; nor was Ecclesiastes, which belongs to the second or third century before Christ; nor was the Song of Solomon, which is a love poem, and not an allegory; so that the headings of the chapters, in our English Bible, are an absurd, if not a base, imposition on the British public. Job is not history, but a drama, belonging to the period of the Captivity, and the speeches of Elihu are interpolations. Daniel was written hundreds of years after the time of its ostensible author, probably about 168 B.C.; so that its prophecies were fulfilled, because the events occurred first and the writer predicted them afterwards. Jonah was written long after the prophet's age, probably in the fifth century; and it is "not strictly historical"; that is, Jonah never converted Nineveh, and never took a submarine excursion in the belly of a whale.

There is a great outcry in your Churches, gentlemen, against the publication of such conclusions as those of Canon Driver, but I did not observe that the clamorers tried to answer him. They wanted to silence him. But it is too late to do that; the cat is fairly out of the bag. People with any eyesight, and there are more of them than you think, now perceive that all you have been teaching, for so many years, about the Old Testament, is a falsehood. Its various books were not written, for the most part, by the

persons whose names you have put at the top of them; in fact, you do not know *who* wrote them; and, if you have been all along mistaken as to who wrote these books, and when they were written, I say it is a thousand to one that you are also mistaken as to their *contents*. It seems to me downright nonsense to say you do not know who wrote a certain book, and at the same time to say you are quite sure that all it contains is true.

The books of the New Testament, as to their authorship, are just as uncertain as the books of the Old Testament. Of the fourteen Epistles by Paul, only *four* are generally admitted as *authentic*, and even those are *disputed*. The other Epistles, by Peter and John, are also doubtful, if not spurious. Nor are the Gospels in any better plight. Matthew Arnold thought it time to tell the public that the Gospels did not exist, as we now have them, before the last quarter of the second century; that is, a good deal more than a hundred years after the death of Christ. Dr. Giles, a clergyman of the Church of England, declared that *none* of the New Testament books existed, as we have them, within a hundred and twenty years after the Crucifixion. It is generally allowed by the most competent critics that the earliest writings about Jesus Christ are lost; that the four Gospels, bearing the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were written long afterwards, in the second century, by unknown persons; and that it was a very common thing, in the early Christian Church, to compose books and attach to them the names of the Apostles.

Now, gentlemen, I want to ask you a plain question, to which I should like you to give me a plain answer. Your Bible is stuffed with the most tremendous miracles; that is, stories which no man is called upon to believe, unless they are accredited by the most tremendous evidence. Do you really think, gentlemen, that the evidence you offer is *good enough*? Can you expect people, who think for themselves, to believe a host of things contrary to sane experience, on the word of men who lived *somewhere*—God knows where; and at *some time*—God knows when?

The "advanced" ministers—that is, those amongst you, gentlemen, who patronise the "New Criticism"—are patching up a new theory of *Inspiration*. They see that it will no longer do to maintain the old position, that the Bible contains *truth* only, without any admixture of *error*; or, to use the words of the famous Mr. Spurgeon, that every sentence of it was written by an Almighty finger, and every word of it fell from Almighty lips. Knowing that their Word of God does contain errors, in science and history, to say no more; they now teach that the writers (whoever they were) were only inspired in relation to religion and ethics; in short, that the Bible is God's Word because it reveals to us religious and moral truths which we could not ourselves discover. But this is only a temporising theory; it may do for the time, but it will presently be seen through and abandoned; in brief, your Word of God will, sooner or later, have to stand on the shelf, side by side with other Words of God; and then, gentlemen, you will have to get your livings in a more honest and useful profession.—Yours, with best wishes,

G. W. FOOTE.

The Lesson of the Balkan Atrocities.

THE cruelties committed by the Greeks upon the Bulgarian soldiers and the Bulgarian population in Macedonia are too monstrous for condonation and too well attested to be denied. They are not to be excused as the savage outbursts of an infuriated soldiery; but are equally the outcome of the designed maliciousness of men whose official or religious status might have kept them within the bounds of a more or less decent ferocity. The public declaration made by the Bulgaroktonos, in advance of these horrors, that he would be obliged to "proceed to

acts of reprisal" upon the Bulgarians, no doubt inflamed the national and religious rancor of the Greek soldiery and population against the Bulgarians, and more than accounts for the savageries which the blood-intoxicated but pious soldiers of King Constantine admittedly committed upon thousands of hapless members of a race upon which the royal lips had pronounced doom as a people that no longer had the right to be numbered amongst civilised nations.* Constantly in these horrors we find Greek archbishops and other liveried servants of God directing the operations of massacre, as at Serræ, where, in fact, the hasty tribunal of death was presided over by a Greek ecclesiastic in order that the Greek-speaking victims, who were found with the common herd, might not escape massacre by pretending that they were Greeks (Miletitch, p. 46).

The process of hellenisation, which began with slaughter and continued by enforced exile during the last two years, is still maintained upon the remnant of the Bulgarian race in Macedonia, though on a slightly diminished scale of ferocity. At the present moment, the situation of the Bulgarians everywhere in Macedonia is becoming untenable except as a temporary affliction which may, at some future time, goad the Bulgarian Government, perhaps in concert with Turkey, to wipe out of the national memory, as an intolerable affront upon humanity, by the terrible process of fresh blood-letting in the Balkans. It may be colorably contended that the harassing policy of persecution pursued by the Greek authorities in Macedonia to-day, is even more odious as being more cowardly and cold-blooded than the excesses which followed last year upon the triumph of the Greek arms over the betrayed and outnumbered Bulgarians. Accounts day by day in the Bulgarian papers show that Macedonia to-day is groaning under a veritable regime of terror, and the new masters of the Macedonian Bulgarians are burning, pillaging, and pitilessly destroying the remnants of the Bulgarian race native of this blood-drenched soil, as though to show the world how these Christians love one another. An astute policy of "beat my neighbor out of doors" is being adopted by the Greek Government, which has recently given its calculated hospitality in these parts to multitudes of Greek refugees from Turkish Thrace, and installed the new-comers—who, in fact, are the victims of another type of tyranny—in many of the villages inhabited from time immemorial by men and women of Bulgarian race. Adopting the noble principle of robbing Peter to pay Paul, the Greek authorities have winked at or connived at the plunder of waggon-loads of stock from the Bulgarian natives in order to establish the Greek refugees in their new land of enforced exile. In a number of villages the Bulgarians have recently been stripped of money, animals, furniture, clothing, and other things; and any of the poor devils who had the audacity to resist or complain were regaled with tortures of a refined character which recall the spirit of the Holy Inquisition. It was precisely because these abominations were in full swing at the time (and they continue till the present moment) that the Greek authorities frowned their disapproval upon the investigations which the Carnegie Commission of Inquiry were then proposing to make concerning the true inwardness of the Macedonian atrocities and as to the degree of responsibility resting upon the late allied nations in reference to the pandemonium in the Balkans.

In view of the present ugly complexion of affairs between the rival religions and races in the Balkans, and especially between Patriarchalist Greeks and Exarchist Bulgarians, it is easy to see that unless Europe intervenes with tact and vigor (and she will not do this, of course) war is sure to break out in the near future between the Greek and Bulgarian nations. I have no doubt that Bulgaria would be quite willing to submit her cause of quarrel to the arbitrament of the Hague Tribunal; but Greece—in the arrogance

* See "Fac-simile" letters passim cited in the *Freethinker* of June 21 and July 5.

of her present triumphant mood, at least—will not deign to listen to any such proposal. Two things are happening to-day that alone would suffice to justify these grave fears. First, that the hellenisation of the Bulgarian inhabitants is being enforced by the proscription of the Bulgarian tongue, and the application of torture (the insertion of nails between the fingers or the driving of sharp persuasive instruments under the nails, are among the polite attentions which recalcitrants receive) in order to induce the Bulgarian peasants to talk Greek; and, secondly, that in the Churches which formerly belonged to the Bulgarians, but are now grabbed by their enemies, the Greeks are actually chanting prayers every Sunday imploring God Almighty to exterminate the cursed Bulgarian race.

In order to estimate the moral degradation which war—or shall we say war when waged in the Balkans?—engenders even in the minds of archbishops, the case of Monsignor Germanos, the Metropolitan Bishop of Pravichta, in Macedonia, will serve for profit and edification. During the late war this holy bishop of the Greek orthodox type, placed himself at the head of a Greek battalion and took advantage of his position to intrude his presence into the harems of Turkish subjects and violate the honor of Moslem women. His turpitudes recently came before the court martial at Constantinople and were rewarded by a sentence of fifteen years' hard labor. Unfortunately for the cause of justice, he was convicted in *contumaciam*, his episcopal pluck not being equal to anything more heroic than the storming of a harem. In point of fact, the bishops in Macedonia seem to have compared themselves in the Balkans like the old fighting, pillaging bishops of the Middle Ages. The sordid details set forth by Dr. Kyroff* clearly exhibit the Greek bishops in Macedonia during the last two years as a collection of brigands, blackmailers, and murderers. The exploits of the Archbishop of Serrés, and his holy complicity in the butcheries perpetrated at that place, are too terrible for the sober pages of this journal: they will be found set forth with harrowing particulars in Dr. Miletitch's book.† These frightful examples, which show how the "Holy Spirit," which these men monopolise and impart, does not always render them immune from the soiling influence of passion and hate, are for our instruction and warning; they teach us that men ordinarily virtuous and kind, even those men who are consecrated to holiness here and heaven hereafter, are not to be trusted with the God-like omnipotence that enables them to do what they like or wreak their animosities upon people whom they do not like. All history, in all times, is but the inventory of the misdeeds of irresponsible power; and much of the misery in times past, and especially much of the misery in the present situation in the Balkans, is but the sordid trail of crime left by the footprints of triumphant violence.

And here, on the eve of the publication of the Carnegie report,‡ I must suspend for awhile the preliminary skirmishes of my pen. I have no doubt that the disclosures of that report will sadden once again the hearts of those who hoped—and hoped in vain—that the Balkan nations, freed from the domination of the Crescent, would make the Cross the emblem not only of liberty, but of civilisation. For the present, liberty in the Balkans is trampled under foot; civilisation is clouded by the mists of racial hatred and furious national antagonisms; and the Cross has around it a widespread nimbus of tears and blood. The most cruel war of modern times, which began as a holy crusade and finished as a bestial conflict between the Crusaders themselves, leaves the future

prospects of the Balkans darkened by the grim shadows of impending war. Evidently, the scramble of the Allies for the biggest slice of Turkey has only passed through the first stage of its evolution. All the marks of impermanence are impressed upon the present dispositions of the international chess-board in the Balkans. A renovated New Turkey may ere long unite with a renewed and reinvigorated Bulgaria for the purpose of adjusting frontiers at the expense of Servians on the one hand and Greeks on the other. And once more the Balkans will be bathed in blood and its populations decimated by outrage and massacre; and Cross and Crescent will become, as of yore, the emblems of national hatred and the edifying excuse for interminable slaughter.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Joseph Chamberlain.

OTHER journals are discussing the late Mr. Joseph Chamberlain as a politician, but party politics are outside our province. We have a few words to say about him as to religion.

We understand that Mr. Chamberlain came of a Unitarian family. He might therefore call himself a Nonconformist. Certainly he was not a member of the Church of England. It was rumored that even his Unitarianism was of a very advanced order. There was little difference, it was said, between his religious views and those of his friend John Morley, in the old fighting days, when John Stuart Mill was the "prophet and priest" of the Radical dispensation.

It must be admitted, however, that Mr. Chamberlain's heresy was largely inferential. He was judged by the company he kept. And some of it was bad enough. Morley was by no means the worst. There were outspoken Atheists amongst the soldiers of progress who gathered round the standard of the *Fortnightly Review* and afterwards of the *Nineteenth Century*. We do not remember any pious expressions even in his "demagogic" speeches to the "mob,"—to borrow some of the phrases of his adversaries. He also spoke as one whose only religion was the public welfare, and his only church the House of Commons. He never "hit" it with Bradlaugh, we believe. Probably it was a case of rival ambitions. But he was much more friendly with Labouchère; and "Labby's" biographer tells us that his opinions were identical with Bradlaugh's on philosophical and religious questions.

On the "Bradlaugh question" in the early 'eighties—the question whether the Atheist member for Northampton should take the seat to which he had been constitutionally elected—Mr. Chamberlain spoke and voted according to his principles; although we do not see his name in the Index of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's biography of her father.

Throughout his career Mr. Chamberlain was sound on the question of Secular Education. He kept to the old Radical program of "Free, Compulsory, and Secular Education." In his last speeches on Education in the House of Commons in relation to the unhappy Bills of the Liberal Government, in desertion of their own principles at the bidding of the political Nonconformists, headed by the Rev. Dr. Clifford, who stands for "Secular Education plus the Bible," Mr. Chamberlain plainly declared that his own views had not changed in the least. He was still in favor of Secular Education as the only wise and just policy. But he had never been able to persuade his Nonconformist brethren of this, and he had therefore to satisfy himself with the best course in the circumstances. He was sure, however, that the policy of Secular Education was the policy that all parties were bound to come to at last.

This, then, is one plank of Mr. Chamberlain's program which never changed. And it is to his credit that this plank was one that did not tend to increase his popularity.

* *Reponse*, etc., pp. 64-65.

† *Atrocités*, etc., pp. 45-58, and 137-140.

‡ This report (a magnificent but saddening volume in French) reached me whilst I was proofing this article. Its 496 pages corroborate many of the incidents of horror related in my three articles, and on p. 274 sets forth in detail the thefts and murders committed by Greek archbishops during the war.

Opinions vary as to Mr. Chamberlain's personality. A French critic once said that he had the head of a Roman emperor of the decadence. Mr. George Meredith, in a later letter, referred to his "adventurous nose." His admirers, on the other hand, often spoke of him as the greatest statesman that ever lived, and for a long while at Birmingham it was dangerous blasphemy to differ from him on any subject whatever. But years have passed since bodily paralysis ended his political career. Death has only ratified the announcement made a few months ago that he would not stand again for his old constituency. It was a very touching end to a stormy career. Many people will regard it as singular that Mr. John Redmond, of all men, should say the best word on this point:—

"Although Ireland in the past has had bitter memories in connection with Mr. Chamberlain's career, the Irish people are a generous people, and long ago these bitter memories were forgotten. There has been a universal feeling of sympathy in Ireland at the pathetic spectacle of his long illness. He was a great man."

We speak as something better than politicians in saying that we hope these generous words will help to soften the hard feelings that still keep Ireland a divided nation.

G. W. FOOTE.

Acid Drops.

Mr. Asquith's tribute in the House of Commons to the aged Emperor of Austria, who has suffered so many bereavements by violent death, seems to have pleased the Christians. In a certain way also it was pleasant to Freethinkers. "Around few figures in the history of Europe," the Premier said, "had it pleased Providence to gather and concentrate such a pitiless and, in the human eye, such an unmerited succession of dark and wounding experience." This is an admission that the assassin of the Archduke was merely the tool of Providence. Why then should the tool be tried and punished for the action of the wielder?

It has not yet been suggested, as far as we know, that the assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife was due to "infidelity." No doubt the assassins were as good Christians as the victims were. There is no need to go beyond the Bible for encouragement to assassination. Look at Ehud who went to King Eglon with "a present from God" in the shape of a long dagger which he thrust into the monarch's fat belly with fatal effect. Look at Jael who killed Sisera when he was enjoying the hospitality of her tent, by nailing his head to the floor while he was asleep; whose praises were sung by Deborah the prophetess as "blessed amongst women." Look at Judith who turned General Holofernes' head with her beauty and cut it off when he was in a stupor of satiety. These assassins, male and female, are all glorified in Holy Writ; and the inference to every believer in the Word of God is "Go thou and do likewise."

Sir William Robertson Nicoll, whenever he writes or speaks on religious questions, adopts a tone of absolute infallibility. There is no possibility of his ever being mistaken, and so whoever differs from him is in hopeless error. Samuel Butler and H. G. Wells advocate theories of human society which he denounces as fundamentally false and pernicious. Readers of *Erewhon*, *The Coming Race*, *The World Set Free* are solemnly warned against the ridiculous and partly profane views therein enunciated. Then in the cocksure style of the divine he says: "We know what man needs and what Christianity supplies." One thing is historically beyond dispute, namely, that whatever man needs Christianity has signally failed to supply. Nothing is easier than to criticise the various Utopian visions that from time to time have been given to the world; but the fact remains, and it cannot be honestly blinked, that, under Christianity, the human race has always been disturbed and cursed by bitter strife, malice, hatred, persecution, and war. Christendom has been for nigh two thousand years nothing but a battlefield drenched with blood mostly spilt in Christ's name.

Now, Sir William, instead of facing undeniable facts, gets upon his high horse and blindly dogmatizes thus: "We affirm that there is no prospect of happiness or stability in a purely secular society. Man must depend upon God." That is fanaticism of the worst kind. In point of fact,

happiness and stability have prevailed and still do prevail in a purely secular society. This statement is susceptible of the completest verification; and were he to divest himself of Christian prejudice Sir William himself would be convinced of its truth.

The Rev. Ossian Davies says that "if man has no immortal nature he is only a beast—the first and wisest of beasts, it may be, but still a beast." A sillier sentence was never penned. Immortality is an inference from an unverified and unverifiable assumption. Not a single fact can be quoted to show that man's nature differs from that of an animal. He has everything in common with monkeys, and his end is exactly like theirs. In any case, man is not a beast, this being a term now applied to a four-footed animal, or one that arouses fear or repulsion, being commonly opposed to man. Has Mr. Davies forgotten that Shakespeare calls man "the paragon of animals"?

The Rev. Dr. Orchard imparts to us the startling information that Christ is now outside his Church, but has the strongest possible desire to get inside once more. Whether he went out of his own accord, in a huff, or whether he was forcibly turned out, we are not told; but the reverend gentleman is quite sure that he is standing at the door and knocking eagerly and loudly for admission, although somehow or other the Church is not prepared to receive him. We are equally certain that the whole thing is nothing but a fairy tale.

We were rather surprised, but not the less pleased, to find a Church journal protesting against the newspaper campaign in connection with the Royal family. In this case it is in connection with the Prince of Wales at Oxford—what he eats, drinks, wears, how he walks, and other equally uninteresting and trivial details. The press booming of royalty has now been going on for some years, and it is one of the many disquieting features of our time. It has not to commend it even the robust loyalty of an earlier generation. It is mainly catering to a morbid appetite for unimportant details about prominent persons. One sees yards of pictures with "the King watching a game of football," "Mr. Lloyd George leaving Downing-street," "Mr. Balfour walking down Whitehall," or similar inspiring legends underneath. So far as we can see, George the Fifth looks at anything in the same way as other people, and Mr. Balfour and Mr. Lloyd George when they walk put one leg in front of the other much the same as ordinary folk. We suppose this sort of thing must interest some people or it would not appear, but one is left marvelling at the intelligence of those whom it interests, and wondering at the value of a press that fills its columns with such stuff.

Although the Catholic Church in England does not show as great a decrease in membership as some of the Protestant Churches, it yet fails to hold its own in relation to growth of population. In a pamphlet recently published, Rev. J. H. Wright, S.J., points out that, without taking account of the number of converts gained last year, the Catholic Church in England numbers nearly 750,000 less than it should have had had it kept pace with the increase of population. These figures strike us as rather large, but they bring out the general truth that every Church in Christendom is losing its hold on the public. Some lose less adherents than others, but none of them are holding their own.

Dr. George Nickson, the recently appointed Bishop of Bristol, in an address delivered on his enthronement, also bears evidence to the decline of Christianity. He said:—

"No one can say that Christianity is in possession. Men are turning in other directions than Bethlehem or Calvary for the solution of their problems. The evidences for this are widespread. In social and economic movements we see labor and capital organising on lines in which Christianity, at least avowedly, plays the smaller of parts, while any attempt on the part of the Church to bring her influence to bear is regarded with aloofness, if not with suspicion. In the domain of thought and science, we are warned that these are departments self-sufficing for their purposes, and while the old antagonism between science and religion has disappeared, the claim of emancipation from its direction is insistent."

Christianity is in possession socially and financially, intellectually it has been dispossessed on all hands. It is not overstating the case to say that the majority of thoughtful and educated people in every country in Europe have rejected Christianity. We do not mean by this that they reject the name of Christian; that is about all they retain of the original article. But tried by the test of any authoritative statement of Christian doctrine, they have ceased to be Christian. And nothing shows the desperate plight of the

Churches more clearly than the fact that they are anxious to claim as Christian men and women who deliberately reject most, if not all, of the cardinal Christian doctrines.

An extraordinary case is reported in the *Transvaal Leader*, Johannesburg, of Tuesday, June 9:—

"Before Mr. Justice Krause, at the Pietersburg Circuit Court on Friday last, a young native girl, about 17 or 18 years of age, was charged with practising as a witch-doctor in contravention of Section 30 of Ordinance 26 of 1904. She was undefended both in the Court below and in the Circuit Court. She was an ordinary barbarian native girl from that part of the Zoutpansberg district near Louis Trichardt.

"Three witnesses were called to establish the case for the Crown. The first, a native named Nebudogwa, stated that about February, 1913, he and eight other natives, including two named Mudzuala and Mahengani, and a native woman, Nyalalumbe, consulted the accused, who was practising as a witch-doctor, as to who had been the cause of the death of their relatives. The accused threw the bones, after being paid 5s., and said that a witch-doctor had caused the death of the relatives, and indicated the native woman, Nyalalumbe, as the witch. She was then paid a goat and a sheep by the others present, and the consultation ended.

"The second witness was Mahengani, who corroborated the evidence of the last witness, and also stated that on the 29th August, 1913, Mudzuala killed the woman Nyalalumbe, presumably because she was a witch. On the 9th November, 1913, Mudzuala was sentenced to death for the murder at the Pietersburg Circuit Court.

"The third witness was the father of the accused. He stated that about December, 1912, she recovered from a long illness. She then came to him and said: 'I know everything; I am a witch-doctor.' She then provided herself with a set of bones and commenced practising as a witch-doctor. He also stated that he had seen her go into trances, and that she was quite a young girl.

"There were no previous convictions nor any police record against the accused.

"The jury brought in a verdict of guilty of practising as a witch-doctor.

"The Judge, after reprimanding the accused for practising upon the credulity of the natives, said he would make an example of her, as witch-doctoring caused a great deal of mischief and had to be stopped. He sentenced her to the maximum sentence—imprisonment for life."

We suppose this is the good old Boer law, founded on the Bible, as the English law was in former years. But surely this sentence will not be allowed to stand. Such an infamous barbarity, if carried out, would disgrace not only South Africa but the whole British Empire.

Rev. Bernard J. Snell says that the other day he received a letter from a correspondent, asking, "How do you get over that scripture, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live'?" To this he replied, "It has never caused me the slightest twinge of uneasiness. How does it affect you?" This does not strike us as a very courageous way of facing a plain question. It may be that the text has never troubled Mr. Snell; but if that is so, one can only say, So much the worse for Mr. Snell. It is part of the Christian Scriptures; it has been part of the teaching of every one of the historic Churches of Christendom; it has caused the deaths of many thousands of women, and even of children; and the possibility of commerce with Satan was endorsed by Jesus Christ. And yet a Christian minister can reply that the text never troubled him. What Mr. Snell's correspondent obviously wished to know was how he could account for a religion claiming all that Christianity claims teaching such a villainous doctrine, and one which we know to have been founded upon pure delusion. And to that Mr. Snell gives no reply whatever.

Mr. Snell would probably reply that we have to take such a teaching in connection with the culture of the time at which the books of the Bible were written. That is good advice from a Freethinker, and is, indeed, the advice that any Freethinker would offer. He sees that the belief in witches is a product of pre-scientific thought, and is not surprised to find it among uncivilised or semi-civilised peoples, whether in Biblical times or among contemporary savages. But the Christian is in a different position. If the Bible is wrong on this point, how can we be certain that it is right on any other? If the belief in witches was a product of the time at which the Bible was written, what about the belief in God, in heaven, in a soul, in the divinity of Jesus, in miracles? Must not these have been equally due to the same cause? Adopt this point of view, and the Bible as an authoritative text-book of religion disappears altogether. What we have left is a collection of legends and beliefs, interesting to the anthropologist, useful enough for illustrating varying stages of human culture, but of no greater intrinsic value than the legends of contemporary uncivilised peoples.

Writing in *T. P.'s Weekly*, Mr. G. K. Chesterton refers to "apple-pie bed" as a "good old Christian practical joke." We assume that some of the more serious Christian practical jokes consisted of burning heretics.

A volume of short stories has been published with the title, *The Mercy of the Lord*. We wonder if it refers to the Plagues of Egypt, Noah's Flood, the Massacre of the Innocents, and other examples of the Divine Benevolence.

Some years ago some workmen had been excavating in Westminster Abbey, and were told to be careful because Dr. Arne, the composer of "Rule Britannia," was buried on the spot. "It's too late, gov'nor," replied one of the navvies. "If we'd known, we wouldn't have driven that drain-pipe through him."

The Rev. Joseph Walleit, of Westcliff, one of the survivors of the *Empress of Ireland* disaster, says, "fathers and mothers, if you do anything for your boys and girls, for God's sake teach them to swim." Why drag in Deity? According to the Bible, "God" once drowned the whole world with the exception of a few persons. Has the reverend gentleman a premonition of another dose of the divine loving-kindness?

Cardinal Gasquet says it is certain that a clergyman or a priest is worth three policemen. We are not quite so sure about that. It is certain that the clergy have not done away with the necessity for policemen, and it is not unusual for one to find both flourishing in the same area.

The Cardinal also deplors the fact that the old dictum, "Christianity is the law of the land," no longer has any force, but that "everywhere the goodly framework of society, which is the creation of Christianity, is throwing off Christianity." This strikes us as a compound of bigotry and bluff. We can quite believe that the Cardinal regrets the change that has come over the law of the country, and would prefer the days when the reply to the heretic and the Freethinker took the form of imprisonment. But we are a little surprised at Cardinal Gasquet—whose historical studies ought to have taught him better—fathering such obvious rubbish about Christianity creating the framework of society. That bears about the same relation to Christianity that Mounmouth does to Macedon. Society is primarily a biological and human fact. All that theology does is to modify some of the expressions of social life in its own interests. And it does not need a very elaborate study of history to prove that whenever these modifications have been made, it has been left for a later and riper experience to modify them in turn, and to ultimately reject them. That Christianity is no longer the law of the land is a case in point.

"Faith as an Aid to Beauty" ran a headline in the *Daily News and Leader*. Christians will need plenty of faith, for they mostly have the expression of tired hearse-horses. How much prayer will it take to make a snub nose into a thing of beauty and a joy for ever?

When a prisoner at North London, charged with biting another man's ear, protested that he was not a cannibal, the magistrate said cannibals eat other people to acquire their virtues, and were a noble race compared with backbiters. We agree; but cannibals cannot get much virtue from a solitary missionary; they ought to dine off a Sunday-school excursion or a mother's meeting.

His Majesty, George V., has an affection for fire-fighters. He reviewed the London Fire Brigade at Hyde Park last week, and he is constantly laying the foundation-stones of churches. The King thus patronises fires in two worlds.

Mr. Ex-President Roosevelt's physicians have forbidden him absolutely to keep out of politics for four months. We hope the prohibition also extends to theological matters.

The *Church Family Newspaper* attributes to Garrick the answer given by an actor to a bishop who wondered why the stage had so much greater influence on people than the pulpit—"Because I recite fiction as if it were true, while you deliver truths as if they were fictions." A much better story, and one with more truth in it, is Fielding's retort to the historian who remarked that the author of *Tom Jones* wrote fiction. No, said Fielding, it is you who write fiction. I deal with facts, using fictitious names and dates.

With you, names and dates are the only real things. That touches a far more profound truth. A good novel deals with the enduring facts of human nature, its heights and depths, lights and shadows, and these have their value whether the actual characters of the novel ever existed or not. A good novel gives us life as we can all know it, if we use our eyes and our brains. The ordinary history gives us a list of quite correct names and dates, but attached to persons from whom all that is humanly interesting has been emasculated. History, as generally written, would be unintelligible but for the reader supplying from his own experience what the historian so often fails to give. As a case in point, let one read Flaubert's *Saint Antony*, and he will have a better appreciation of the life of the monk than could be derived from a score of histories.

But to return to the Garrick story. Naturally, the stage—given the right kind of actor—grips more than the pulpit. But this is not because the first deals well with fiction and the latter deals badly with truth. It is because the stage is dealing with truth all the time. The loves and hatreds, the humor and pathos, of the stage appeals to all more or less because they are phases of human nature that everyone knows and recognises. The pulpit meets with a relative failure because it is actually and inevitably concerned with fictions. An incarnate Deity, a crucified God, a heaven and hell, angels and devils, are all fictions; they are all removed from the actualities of life, and their presentation only meets with a qualified success when they are associated with more human elements. The reason why even an indifferent actor may succeed in making a more powerful appeal than a good preacher is that the actor deals with truths, even though he robs them of some of their power in the presentation. It is the clergyman who deals with fictions, and the sense of their unreality remains when the glamor of the preacher's personality has passed away.

The *Times* published the other day (June 29) a special supplement on Spain. It will be interesting to many because of the evidence offered that, despite opposition, educational influences in Spain are gathering strength. The work of Ferrer and other reformers is thus bearing fruit, although the dead-weight of clericalism, Conservatism, and reactionary forces generally, is still enormous. It is also plain that there is a considerable circulation in Spain of Freethinking works, and although the *Times* is discreetly reticent as to their influence, there is no doubt that they are steadily undermining the authority of religion. With the power of the Church broken, there is no reason whatever why Spain should not again take its place among the foremost civilised nations of Europe. The country possesses great possibilities from both a commercial and an intellectual point of view. These have been lying idle for centuries, thanks to the power of the Christian Church, but with this out of the way their development is certain. Spain, under its Mohammedan rulers, played a part in civilisation; it sank to the depths under Christian control, and its removal is the indispensable condition of its resurrection.

Churches, a theological professor assures us, "are the only societies on earth possessing the Holy Spirit." We know nothing about the Holy Spirit; but, judging by the general character and history of the Churches, we cannot escape the conclusion that to possess him is by no means an unmixed blessing.

According to the *Evening News*, the Psychological Researcher is "arriving at a conviction that his own comrades, as they die, carry beyond death their own curious interests that something like a Society for Psychological Research is beginning to operate from the Other Side." It is very like the poor Indian dreaming of the Happy Hunting Grounds.

"The British Sunday remains a thing to be wondered at, laughed at, and deplored," says Mr. Arthur Boucher, the famous actor. The world does move after all, for this is a thing that Freethinkers have said for centuries.

A squadron of Italian soldiers have at last captured the stronghold of the notorious Corraine brigands. It contained a large store of provisions sent in by persons marked out for vengeance as well as from villages by way of blackmail. Crucifixes and prayer-books lying on the floor suggested that the brigands had been disturbed at their devotions.

The Rev. Silvester Horne left over £5,000. We thought it would have been more. Perhaps the secret of that lies with Mrs. Horne. It would be absurd to say that five thousand pounds is a fortune as things go, but it is a good deal

for a disciple of him who taught "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth," "take no thought for the morrow" and "blessed be ye poor."

Here are two other professional Christites who did better than Mr. Horne. Rev. Roger Edgeworth, rector of Rusper, Horsham, Surrey, left £10,848. Rev. Charles Stead Hope, vicar of Holy Trinity, Southport, left £34,502. "And their works [but not their cash] do follow them."

A later report makes the Rev. Silvester Horne's "little bit" £8,450. We thought it would be even more than that. And here are a few more poor Christites cropping up as we go to press. Rev. Charles Fleetwood Porter, of Staverton Grange, Oxford, left £11,916. Rev. Canon Robert Hudson Borradaile, of Oxted, Surrey, left £27,171. Rev. Herbert George Morse, of Holland Park, London, formerly Rector of Littleham, Bideford, Devon, left £44,429.

An Indiana, U.S.A., lady is on her way to Europe to startle the inhabitants by a dress displaying £100,000 worth of jewels, diamonds being worn in the heels of her shoes. The lady should feel more at home walking the golden streets of the Christian heaven.

The King is interesting himself in the movement for founding an American church in London, which is to cost £150,000. In order to fill this huge building, we presume that the accepted Yankee methods of giving cups of tea and chocolates to the worshippers will be resorted to.

Mr. Israel Zangwill says, "Let me write for the clergy—I do not care who writes for the crowd." Is he grateful because the dear clergy have made the crowd worship a Jewish God?

An advertisement appears in a Sunday paper championing "Celestial Shepperton." We imagine Heaven-on-Thames is better than the Petticoat-lane ideals of the Christians.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been quoting Victor Hugo as saying that there were only three men in the world's history who were really worthy of being commemorated—Moses, Homer, and William Shakespeare. Well now, Moses is certainly a legendary being, Homer is probably so too; which leaves us Shakespeare as the great reality.

A new religious sect has recently come into existence in Great Britain, which glories in the high-sounding name of the Brotherhood of the Universal Bond. It is said to have 16,000 members, who assemble for worship in numerous temples up and down the country, five of which are situated in London. Many outsiders call them sun-worshippers, but, in reality, they are simply reverers of nature, and of the Great Spirit which, they believe, manifests itself through Nature. They have points in common with the ancient Druids, and they share some of the views held by modern Buddhists; but justice demands that we should regard them as a distinct communion. Like all sectarians, they are noted for their sense of self-sufficiency. Their mission is to set the whole world right, and they publish a journal, the avowed object of which is, "the spiritual illumination of all mankind." After all said and done, all advocates of "spirituality," or of "the spiritual life" as the ideal life of man, are in the same supernaturalistic boat which drifts perilously and uselessly, if not very harmfully, upon the sea of life, never reaching any harbor.

Miss Elizabeth Ellis, aged fifty-eight, formerly proprietress of the "John Barleycorn" public-house at Hitchin, hung herself from a beam in the kitchen of her house in King's-road. She had dressed herself in black, and her gloves were of the same color. On the table was a Bible; also a Prayer-book open at the burial service. It is just as Talmage and Torrey said: You can't keep these Atheists from suicide!

The Bishop of London's Bill for raising the age of consent to eighteen is too modest. In view of so many clerical scandals, his Lordship should make the age eighty, not eighteen.

The Rev. R. Fotheringham, writing in *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, says that if Methuselah were alive, he would be the saddest man in the world. Poor old Methuselah wouldn't be half so sad as the poor wretches who have to live for ever in the next world, and who had corns on their fingers through playing their harps.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £174 4s. 6d. Received since:—T. Raff, £2 2s.; T. Turner, 5s.; A. Gardener, 2s. 6d.; S. Clowes, 2s. 6d.

T. RAFF (S. Africa).—Thanks for your encouraging letter, and your good wishes for our future health and success in our labors for Freethought.

F. E. COPE.—The proper way to form a Branch of the N. S. S. is to join yourself first, through the General Secretary. Miss E. M. Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C. Then to get forms of application for membership for others, and send same (with subscriptions) to the same address. There must be seven members to start a Branch. When formed, the Branch may be announced in the *Freethinker*.

GENUINE INQUIRER.—There is no contradiction between the two statements. "Abracadabra" refers to the *authorship*; we refer to the extant *documents*.

S. BURNS (S. Africa).—We did not regard the report of that self-appointed committee of parsons and doctors as of any importance. Thanks all the same for your trouble in the matter. Glad to have your high opinion of the *Freethinker*.

The correspondent who sent us the "witchcraft" cutting from Johannesburg omitted his signature from the letter it was enclosed with. We cannot therefore thank him by name.

E. B.—Obliged for cuttings.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Thanks for the reference.

S. CLOWES.—Ours is, as you say, a "tremendous struggle." This will be clearer than ever when we begin our address to the Freethought party next week.

J. W. O'LEARY.—We will look it up. Thanks.

F. GIBBONS.—It must be "a rare nuisance" to have so much difficulty in obtaining your weekly copy of this journal.

W. CROMACK.—Cuttings would do as well as the papers. Thanks.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The July number of the *Humanitarian* contains an excellent article on "Leigh Hunt," presumably by the editor, Mr. H. S. Salt. Hunt is an author who should be much better known. He had the misfortune of coming in the way of friendship between two such men as Byron and Shelley, and suffering in the uninvited but inevitable contrast with those mighty spirits. But he had a genius of his own, nevertheless, and it was mostly devoted to good, and unpopular, and even dangerous causes. And none is better qualified than Mr. Salt is to press Hunt's humanitarianism upon the attention of a later and forgetful age. Another item of interest in this periodical is Mr. Salt's setting the *Hospital* right on "Spare the rod and spoil the child." This is generally quoted as from the Bible; which shows what *care* the generality of Bible readers must have! The quotation is from Butler's *Hudibras*.

Mr. Salt fights for many good causes. One of the most unfriended amongst them is the preservation of English scenery. Mountain scenery, for instance, if once destroyed by the sordid hand of commercialism, is destroyed for ever. It was produced by Nature. Man is incapable of such production. But he can spoil what he cannot create, and degrade what he could not so much as imagine. Solitude is the greatest charm of mountain scenery. The bleating of sheep, the neigh of a horse, the thin, blue smoke from a

cottage altar-fire dedicated to the first and best religion on earth, the occasional voice and footstep of a fellow pedestrian; such inaggressive sights and sounds rather add to than detract from the sense of solitude by the force of contrast—just as a ship on the horizon gives a last touch to the otherwise too austere grandeur of the sea; but the bustle of a holiday mob, carried up the hill and carried down again, is simply an abominable desecration. England is slowly waking up to these things. The unspeakable exploitation of Shakespeare's Cliff in the interest of the patent pill trade has been stopped. Let us hope that prompt public action—for nothing else really avails—will save the natural beauties that still remain in our country. Mr. Salt himself is not very sanguine. He says that, "While we are willing to spend vast sums on grabbing other people's territory, we have not, of course, a penny to spare for the preservation of our own." A bitter reflection! But the writer's own conscience is free from reproach.

The July *English Review* opens with a poem entitled "Morphia," by a Victim. It is not without a certain power, but it lacks art. "The Meaning of Pain," by Edward Carpenter, is thoughtful and suggestive, but is it satisfactory? Can anything on that subject be satisfactory on a Theistic basis? Mr. March Phillips' "Democracy and Art" is well worth reading. Sense as well as poetry is expressed in Mr. Eden Phillpotts' "Home of the West Wind." A lady writer calling herself "Cornelia," writes with great vigor on "Epidemic Hysteria." She calls upon the men who are in authority to put down the criminal Suffragette. The immunity of the destructive woman in a calculating frenzy, trading all the while on the privileges of her sex, must be put an end to. Those who clamor for equality should have it. But the militant Suffragette objects to her share of this "divine equality"—to borrow a phrase from Shelley. "With one hand," "Cornelia" says, "she waves the banner of liberty, with the other she smacks a policeman's face, knowing that he won't smack her back." And so on through many vigorous pages. A careful and informing article by W. M. J. Williams on "The Crown Estate in London" is a valuable feature of this month's *English Review*. Mr. Harrison writes ably on the Irish question, but at the finish he is obliged to admit that all the trouble is at bottom religious, and is summed up in two brutal shibboleths, "To Hell with the Pope!" "To Hell with King William!"

We inserted *two* lists of subscriptions to the Ramsey Testimonial Fund, signed by the General Treasurer, Mr. B. T. Hall, Club Union Buildings, Clerkenwell-road, London, E.C. Two other lists have been sent us, but both obviously inaccurate, names being duplicated and maybe other mistakes committed. It is no part of *our* business to undertake the correction of such things. We must beg whoever is acting as the Secretary to the Fund to have a complete and accurate list of subscriptions sent to us on the Treasurer's behalf. We will gladly insert it in our next issue. By *complets* we mean a full and correct list of all the subscriptions received since the date of the second list acknowledged in our columns. We really cannot take further trouble in this matter.

ORIGIN OF WORSHIP.

Among primitive peoples life in the other world is conceived as identical in nature with life in this world. Hence, as the living chief was supplied with food and drink, oblations are taken to his burial-place and libation poured out. As animals were killed for him while he lived, animals are sacrificed on his grave when he is dead. If he had been a great king, with a large retinue, the frequent slaughter of many beasts to maintain his court is paralleled by the hecatombs of cattle and sheep slain for the support of his ghosts and the ghosts of his attendants. If he was a cannibal, human victims are furnished to him dead as when alive, and their blood is poured on the grave-heap, or on the altar which represents the grave-heap. Having had servants in this world, he is supposed to need servants in the other, and frequently they are killed at his funeral or sent after him. When the women of his harem are not immolated at his burial-place, as they sometimes are, it is usual to reserve virgins for him in his temple. Visits of homage made to his residence become, in after times, pilgrimages made to his tomb or temple; and presents at the throne reappear as presents at the shrine. Prostrations, genuflexions, and other obeisances are made in his presence, along with various uncoverings; and worship in his temple has the like accompaniments. Laudations are uttered before him while he is alive, and the like or greater laudations when he is dead.—*Herbert Spencer*.

Broken Thought-Threads.

LISTEN to their prattling! You would think Humanity were a huge and ugly growth on Nature to hear those religious realists. What tales of woe these interpreters of life tell. What baleful stories of man's degradation they relate. What awful pictures they paint of the bitterness of the struggle against evil. Down they go into the mire of immorality for their colors; and the scenes they depict impart to our minds a darkness that is sorely unpleasant.

Raw life is their material. Blood, brutality, horror, and hopelessness are woven in the texture of their canvas. Everything is heavy, gloomy, and hateful. Your mind seems to have become entombed. You sicken in the prison. The odors are nasty. The atmosphere savors of decay. Nauseation floods your stomach and soul. The robust activity of the decomposition, its burdensome vitality, the lustiness of its depravity, poison your ideas. You feel weak; and you seem to stand before the strength of weakness, cowering, shivering before it; and you feel afraid.

And then your better nature revolts. You long for fresh air with a new appreciativeness. You want to feel merry. Life is not all tragedy, not all misery, not all woe. Damn those religious realists! you murmur. Drat 'em! We want some happiness. And the natural man in you longs for sunshine, for the healthy, inspiriting breeze, for the mountain slopes and the fragrance of the heather, or for a smell of the sea. As you imagine the sweetness and loveliness of Nature, disgust masters you. This is unclean; it is loathsome; it is ugly. Life has more than one side. Humanity is not a gruesome thing, excreted by Nature for Jesus Christ to purify. And you send religious realists and their realism to purgatory.

Still, there are times when Christian realism cannot be so easily sent floating there; and the pictured ugliness gathers and becomes so crudely immoral that your soul—the higher ideas and tendencies and longings of your mind—rises in red-hot rebellion. You revolt against the darkness. You want to fight this mental slavery to gloom, base passion, and low life, instilled by religious realism. You see the disastrousness of it, the fatal influence it wields; and you want to tear the dirty curtain in twain, so that light and loveliness may enter. Give us purity, not dirt. Let's see beauty. Let's feel free. This makes us sick, you say. We want to get out of the dungeons of living death to the highlands of virile life. Sunrises, not gloom, we need; a breeze, not stagnation; happiness, not dirty joy; laughter like the lark's, not the sorrowful croaking of an evil-tipsy raven.

Certain types of books make us feel like that; and certain types of preachers have a similar effect upon us. It is a strange feeling of repugnance that passes through our minds. Something seems to be deepening in tint the stains on our lives. We would rather feel clean; and the soul, as we call it, having striven, even in a quiet, natural way, towards some semblance of purity, feels as if it were being defiled by these religious realists. Why do these men drag the minds of their audiences down into the gutter? How, in the name of everything beautiful, can they think and speak so much ugliness? And religious literature is full of this kind of realism.

Humanity is a wonderful thing. Well may we liken it to the ocean. Powerfully restless, its vast surface tossing in eternal dispeace, its expansive magnificence casting a sense of marvel upon the mind, its innumerable, passing shapes, and incomputable, dissolving shades of purple, grey, and green; how similar the ocean is, in its oneness and variation, to the great sea of Humanity. The breast of the waters knows no prolonged quietude. The face of the ocean reflects, in startling manner, every emotion that circles the human heart; but under-

neath there is the steady flow, more startling in the magnitude of its complacency than all the wonders of its vivid breast. Here you see love; there hate; yonder tempestuous anger; but below is the quiet, steady life.

A mass of glorious confiction, it puzzles and enthral. Imagination is stunned by the scene. Its complexities amaze and charm. Solemnity and riot, laughter and tears, softness and hardness, solicitude and enmity, resolve and indecision; one observant glance, and you see them all.

Sweeping majestically onwards is a great crested wave, its haughtily poised head delighting yet awing you. Seemingly omnipotent, it draws to its might hundreds of smaller waves. Conqueringly, it imprisons them, using their foam-tipped beauties to heighten its own dignity and loveliness and strength. You would think it had determined to rule the ocean. But, as you observe its movement, you notice that, near the horizon, it subsides, losing its power; and you laugh as you see it roll away, ignominiously, to become the underflow for a bigger brother. But it, too, in turn, relinquishes its power and majesty; it, too, droops into individual extinction; it, too, falls into the underflow.

And so the wonderful scene is played on, unchanging in its varieties, eternal in its passing glories.

You look upon Humanity, and you see the same activities. Human movements, the waves on the ocean of human life, have their day and are dead. Prophecy permanency for a wave like that of Christianity, and you accuse yourself of narrowness of mental outlook. It sweeps over a portion of the great human ocean, for a little only; and is gone. The conjectures, the joys, the beauties of it depart at its departure. There are other waves to distract attention from its memories. Into it you put the life, the individuality, that abideth for ever; the supremacy that no man can challenge, you think; the glories of things unalterable, upon which man will do well to place all his trust, all his hope, all his faith; and, lo! it cheats you before your mind has lost the dying glamor of it. Movements, like men, perish. The greatest wave, like the tiniest ripple, falls into the underflow. The ocean exists.

We are funny people in our exalted moods. What giants we think we are. What terribly conclusive ideas we crystallise in words. What dreadful, "amen" truths compose our beliefs.

That poor little gutter-snipe, sitting in the mud, over there, at the alley-mouth, will one day shake God's hand, and be kissed by Mary the Mother of God. That little jigger—looks like a girl—who is sucking a banana-skin will, some day, be embraced by Jesus. She will get a bigger hug than that given to the black tot who, down under, is playing with pieces of coral in a shallow, silver pool. The dirty white one will become a Christian; and Christianity, being God's last gift to Humanity, cancelled all the boons and blessings of his earlier kindheartedness.

We are apt to forget that the waves on the ocean of Humanity lose their individuality.

In the country, at the present time, there is a considerable number of Humanists. The one spring of their beliefs is the conviction that life would be better and happier for the most of us if only we could abolish certain social customs. The very fact that the power of these people is made weak by their segregation into opposing sects seems to prove that mind possesses more potency over their actions than anything else. They must reach the mind if they would succeed in their task. If they would fight against the causes of social evils, they must use mental weapons; but, somehow, they do not consider it advisable to clear the field of action with a broom first. This is strange. They teach new ideas without troubling to destroy the old ones.

The majority of these Humanists are hoighty-toightly unconcerned over the greatest obstacle of the lot. Some of the oldest, fustiest ideas are even championed by many of these people. They would

try to patch up; make a new framework with rotten boards. They would bring the anti-scientific to strengthen the scientific. Now, if our revolutionist and reformative friends and enemies believe that Christianity is not true, are they reasonably justified in their attitude of unconcern? The less they have to do with Freethought the better, seems to be their belief. Is the social power of Religion so negligible in quantity and quality as to support that outlook? Privately, these Humanists, many of them, will tell you they believe that Christianity should be fought. Publicly, they like to tell their audiences of what Jesus Christ would have to do were he alive to-day. They like to quote Scripture. They make the teachings of Jesus Christ the code of individual morality, if not openly and straightforwardly, then by insinuation.

All this must tend to bolster up Religion. Christianity, which is not true, receives support from a quarter that should be inimical to it. Hypocrisy is the only suitable word. To play with the false is to be treacherous to the true. There are no honorable half measures. Compromise is friendly greeting. To linger on the road with error is to stay awhile with pain. Give a lie a smile and you add a day to its life. Humanists who are "plittering" with Christianity, believing it to be untrue, are assisting in its survival.

Whether they work for social reform or for social revolution, they must clean the minds that will make reform or revolution successful in its results. If the teachings of Christianity are stains on the human mind, errors to be conquered, customs to be overthrown, and the majority of Humanists believe this privately, then, logically, methinks, this present unconcern amounts to nothing less than hypocrisy. The treatment they accord to the Freethought movement is as bigoted as Catholics.

The mind comes first. Mental change precedes social change. Keep alive the idea of God, all the fundamental ideas of Religion, and you keep alive privilege, class, autocracy, and plutocracy. Teach the human mind to worship God, and it will worship the greatest men, who are nearest God. Teach it to reverence a body of men, and you will teach it to recognise class privilege. Unreasonably admire the aphorisms of the New Testament, and you help to deify the central and essential figure of the books, and assist in the survival of Religion, with all its tremendous social powers, powers that inevitably war against the Humanists' honest beliefs. Reason demands antagonism to Christianity. Our beliefs demand nothing less than unswerving enmity towards everything that is opposed to them.

I wonder why the Freethought movement is disliked by the many Humanists in this country? Can anything be said for British hypocrisy whose other name is Respectability?

ROBERT MORELAND.

Christian Apologetics.

IX.—THOMAS COOPER ON MIRACLES.

IN his apologetic work entitled *The Verity and Value of the Miracles of Christ*, the great "lecturer on Christianity," Thomas Cooper, opens the discussion as follows:—

"We see unchangeable law in nature," say our leading men of Science: 'fixed law, inexorable law, meets us on every side.' And, because they say so, hundreds of simple folk are being frightened out of their belief in the miracles of Christ."

Having thus introduced the subject, our "lecturer" takes no less than five pages to point out that the Gospel miracles are not in agreement with the usual order of nature. "It is not an ordinary fact of Science," says Mr. Cooper, "that a spoken word cures leprosy or blindness, and that instantaneously." To this I can only reply, "True, O king; it certainly is not." And such being the case, our lecturer proceeds to define a miracle as—"A deed which is an

exception to the usual order of nature: a deed which suspends or transcends what are called the laws of nature." Just so; and further remarks upon this remarkable fact bring us to the end of the first and introductory chapter.

In chapter ii. the writer discusses the somewhat irrelevant question, "Is a miracle possible?" This, of course, was bound to come. Our lecturer says:—

"We expect that the sun will rise and set to-morrow, and the next day, and the next. We expect that the moon will shine, and the stars glitter, for years to come. We expect the return of the seasons, as we have seen it all our lives.....But, now, can you give me a reason why you believe that the sun will again rise and set, the stars still shine, and the harvest be gathered in the future? You will reply, 'So it has been in the Past, and therefore the like will be in the Future.' How do you know that? You know nothing about it. There is no 'therefore' in what you say. You have not, really, given a reason for your belief.....That all these facts have occurred over and over again—although it may be thousands of times—is not a ground of certainty that they will occur again. There is not a rational man in the world who would dare to assert that. Custom—usage—is all that we can allege as the ground of our expectation and belief in these recurrences.....The Materialist may boldly tell us that he believes the order of nature, such as it is now, has always been, and always will be. But he cannot assert—he cannot affirm—that it will always be. He can give no true reason for his belief."

Our lecturer, it will be seen, knows how to take full advantage of the distinction between practical and absolute certainty. But "the ground of our expectation and belief" in the recurrences of natural phenomena is something more than "custom or usage." The latter terms have reference to long-established modes or practices, and long-continued use of matters connected with the people, considered as a nation or race, which could, and often has been, changed. The bold "Materialist," moreover, does not go so far as to say that the present solar system, or "the gathering in of harvest" on this planet, "has always been, and always will be." He knows that change in the material world has always been going on, is going on to-day, and will continue to do so throughout all futurity.

Our "lecturer on Christianity" next takes exception to the word "law," and proceeds through eight or nine pages "to weigh and consider some of the strong terms employed by Professors Huxley and Tyndall, and other men of science—'fixed laws'—'unchangeable laws'—'inexorable law.'" This apologetic objection was also bound to come; but, in the end, the "strong terms" are resolved into "stated, fixed, or settled order," though, as everyone knows, one of the meanings of law is "order." But here an addition is made, which, though only one word, completely alters these fixed or unchangeable laws. In the next paragraph the writer says:—

"Man ought to consider it his bounden duty to get acquainted with the order of nature; because it is God's order, and God preserves it for man's benefit."

Having thus inserted the thin end of the wedge, our lecturer proceeds to drive it home.

"Nature never becomes independent of God. It exists solely by His sovereign Will and Energy. He could stop all the movements in the Universe—He could arrest all the operations of nature—He could deprive nature of all her forces—He could annihilate all nature in a moment, if He chose. Otherwise He is not Almighty, the Absolute One."

Here we might reply to the lecturer in his own words—"How do you know that? You know nothing about it." And the latter statement would be true; for the only authority Mr. Cooper had for the foregoing ridiculous assertions about "God" is the ascription of omnipotence and the creation of the universe to the god Yahweh in the Hebrew scriptures, made over two thousand years ago by the most ignorant and credulous men then living.

After the addition of "God's order of nature," the question as to the possibility of miracles is, of course, answered in the affirmative. And this point being satisfactorily settled, the lecturer gives the

finishing-stroke, in the most approved Christian Evidence style, to all incipient Atheism. He says:—

"Who shall dare to say that God cannot, if he chooses, suspend the usual order of nature, or by some act, and for some reason worthy of Himself, transcend the usual order of nature?"

The answer to this question is, "No one." But the way the query is put looks very much like an attempt to "frighten" the timid sceptic out of his disbelief in the Gospel miracles. Still, one of those much-maligned individuals might, perhaps, be permitted to say that, as a matter of scientific inquiry, we have no evidence of the existence of a god who possesses the power to "suspend the usual order of nature"; that, as a matter of history, we have no evidence that any of the laws of nature has, in a single instance, ever been suspended; and that the accounts in the Old and New Testaments which assert the contrary lack the support of contemporary evidence, and are simply Jewish or Christian fictions. No one, indeed, need deny that in some remote corner of the universe, too distant to be perceived by the most powerful telescope, there may be some sort of a god, hidden perhaps behind one of the most remote stars; but if so, he could have no connection with our solar system, and, travelling with the velocity of light, it would take him thousands of years to reach this planet. Such a deity could have no part in the government of our portion of the universe, or hold any intercourse with the inhabitants of this earth; while his heaven and hell, supposing them to exist, would be in the neighborhood of the aforesaid star, and therefore inaccessible to the imaginary souls or spirits of the denizens of this planet.

In chapter iii. our "lecturer on Christianity" represents a "doubter" among his audience as asking: "Suppose you have shown that miracles are possible, is there any reason to be alleged, worthy of God, why miracles should be performed?" The lecturer's reply to this query takes up thirteen pages, the nature of which may be perceived by the following extracts:—

"Our Savior most plainly and positively told the Jews that His miracles were the credentials of His Messiahship—'The works which the Father hath given me to accomplish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me.' It is his own blessed declaration.....God did not expect the Jews to receive Christ as the promised Messiah, simply because Jesus told them that he was that Messiah. Nor did Jesus Christ expect men to receive Him as their Redeemer, simply because he said He was the Redeemer. The Jews were expected to believe on rational and open proof."

The "words of Jesus" quoted in this extract are from the Fourth Gospel, and were *not* "his own blessed declaration." They were the words of the Gospel-writer himself, who fraudulently placed them in the mouth of his Savior. The Jesus of the Synoptics never employs such absurd language. Our lecturer, in bringing this chapter to a close, says:—

"We conclude, then, that miracles are probable, because God could not leave His fallen creatures, inevitably, to the fatal ruinous consequences of sin, but must provide a Redeemer for them: and that Redeemer needed to produce His miraculous credentials to mankind in order to assure them of the truth of His mission."

The force of this concluding statement is considerably weakened when we come to consider that "God" did "leave his fallen creatures" to the "consequences of sin," and *without* "providing a Redeemer for them" during the whole period of Old Testament history, with several centuries added to reach A. D. 30; that is to say, for not less than four thousand years. And, judging from the Old Testament writings, the Jewish god had no intention, at any time during this long period, of "providing" a Redeemer of the character of Jesus Christ. All the Messiahs or deliverers predicted in the Hebrew scriptures were to be great warriors of the David or Judas Maccabeas type, who should give the Jews their independence, and ultimately make them the greatest nation upon earth. The Mosaic Law, with its animal sacrifice, was to

continue for ever, priests and Levites were to officiate, and proselytes from other nations were to go up to the temple at Jerusalem to keep the principal Jewish festivals, including the Sabbath, New Moon, and feast of Tabernacles (Isaiah ii. 2—4; lxi. 21, 23; Micah iv. 1, 2; Zech. viii. 22, 23; xiv. 18—18). Moreover, according to the Gospels, Jesus Christ was to descend from heaven, with his angels, to judge the world before that generation should pass away—during the lifetime of many of his hearers—immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem.

We are thus asked to believe a most extraordinary story: that for 4,000 years prior to A. D. 30, the Lord God ordained that atonement for the sins of the people should be made by the sacrifice of animals, as prescribed in the Mosaic code of laws. Then, at the end of that period, he devised a new plan of salvation—but for one generation only (A. D. 30—70)—by which simple belief in Jesus should take the place of the former animal sacrifice.

No orthodox Jew of the apostolic age could believe in any such alteration of plan; for he deemed his deity to be unchangeable, and the Mosaic ritual to have been given for all time—both of which alleged facts are plainly stated in the Old Testament.

As it happened, however, the generation of the time of Jesus passed away, as did also the succeeding generation, without the Savior making his promised appearance. Then excuses began to be made for him by the Christian teachers, the most ingenious, perhaps, being the following:—

"In the last days mockers shall come.....saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers [i.e., apostles] fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning.....But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness," etc. (2 Pet. iii. 3—9).

The Epistle from which the foregoing words were taken was forged by a second-century Christian; but it shows that the Church of that day had lost all hope of Jesus ever keeping his promise, and that there were many in the Church who were called "mockers." Generation succeeded generation, down to the present day, and Jesus has made no move—and now never will. So, instead of only forty years of the new plan of salvation, we have had 1,884—and there is no saying when the old Christian superstition will end. But any intelligent reader of the Old Testament ought to be able to see that the god Yahweh had no hand in originating it. I must leave Cooper's other arguments to the next.

ABRACADABRA.

Animals Recently Extinct.—II.

(Continued from p. 429.)

THE quagga is another defunct representative of the fauna of South Africa which lingered on until quite recent years. The quagga was closely related to Burchell's zebra, and was regarded by Selous as the extreme southerly form of that widely ranging quadruped. Its extinction is deeply to be regretted, as it was one of the handsomest of the equine order. The quagga was variously striped, some of the markings being very beautiful. Its disposition was normally mild and gentle, it was readily tamed, yet, abundant as they were in South Africa, the Boers seldom employed them as beasts of burden. Like the blue-buck, the quagga's habitat was restricted to the Cape area; it formerly abounded almost everywhere south of the Vaal River, but beyond that it very rarely ranged. It congregated in troops of from ten to a hundred in the plains of South Africa, frequently accompanied by the gnu and even the ostrich. It was a high mettled animal, and when wounded or infuriated would kick or bite its human enemy. The quagga was quite a match for the hyæna and wild dogs, and the Cape Dutch occasionally utilised

domesticated quaggas as guards to their horses when abroad at night at a period when dangerous beasts were more common than they are at present. But the lucrative hide business which the Boers pursued proved fatal to the preservation of the animal, and the quagga, which was still abundant in 1843, seems to have been completely exterminated some thirty years later.

The quagga interbred easily with the domesticated horse, and Lord Morton's mare became famous when, after having given birth to a male foal from a quagga, she subsequently bore to an ordinary horse a foal that was slightly striped. The belief which is so general among practical breeders that once a female animal is covered by a mongrel or an alien species, the "stain" can never be removed, in this instance received very strong support. Ewart's test experiments were alleged to have disposed of this belief, but his results may be legitimately regarded as quite inconclusive. The truth of telegony, as this phenomenon is termed, is taken for granted by several breeders and owners of pedigree animals with whom the writer has corresponded and conversed on the subject. And telegony was warmly championed by the philosopher of evolution, Herbert Spencer, by its prophet, Professor Haeckel, and Samuel Butler, the gifted author of *Erewhon*, seems to have had no doubt as to its truth.

Steller's sea cow is an additional organism which owes its destruction to human shortsightedness. This mammal was a member of the small animal group known as Sirenia, of which the manatees and dugongs are surviving representatives. The sea cow was first discovered by Bering's exploring party in 1741 on what is now called Bering Island. The expedition was shipwrecked on the island, and the crew were stranded there for some ten months. The ship's surgeon, Steller, penned an excellent account of the habits and appearance of the Arctic sea cow; and, despite the greatest difficulties and discouragements, he carried out a careful anatomical study of the animal. The rhytina, or sea cow, was an unwieldy creature, which weighed about 8,000 lb., and measured nearly 25 ft. in length. The males displayed the fondest affection for the females, and both sexes were remarkably attentive to the young calves. These mammals were inoffensive herbivorous animals, which fed on the sea-weeds and sea-grasses growing near the shore. But, having no previous knowledge of the ways of man, they were innocently unconcerned by his proximity, and were quite easily harpooned. The fundamental basis of all morality, the recognition of reciprocity, was highly developed among these doomed animals. Says Finn, translating from Steller:—

"As soon as any of the beasts were harpooned and began to struggle, its comrades in the herd immediately came up and tried to help the captive. Some, with this idea, tried to capsize the boat with their backs, others bore on the line and strove to break it, or struggled by beating it with their tails to drag the harpoon from the back of the wounded animal, in which attempt they sometimes succeeded."

The sea cows supplied the sailors with fat, which proved a splendid substitute for butter, while its flesh provided excellent meat. Later adventurers in the Arctic seas who sailed there in search of copper, or for the skins and furs of the northern beasts, made the unfortunate sea cow their chief article of food, and the animal was stupidly, wastefully, and wantonly slaughtered by the human invaders. Twenty years after Bering's landing, the fauna of the island had been reduced to insignificant proportions. A party of hunters who visited Bering Island in 1767 or 1768, in quest of foxes, seem to have sealed the fate of the expiring sea cow. In any case, it was never afterwards seen alive, so that in twenty-seven years from its first discovery the unlucky animal was eliminated from Nature's book of life.

One of our poor relations, Kirk's guereza, a beautiful long-tailed monkey which was restricted to the island of Zanzibar, has been blotted out by the head of the family. Sixteen years only after Europeans

had made its acquaintance, the animal had become exceedingly scarce. Man's passion for sport, coupled with the clearing of jungle and forest, were together responsible for the extinction of this interesting organism. Sir John Kirk, after whom the monkey, *Colobus kirki*, was named, was informed that the animal was still to be found in the uninhabited island districts. Says Sir Harry Johnston:—

"Thither Sir John sent his chasseurs to report on the monkey's existence. After a week's absence they returned, triumph illuminating their swarthy lineaments. 'Well, did you find them?' asked the British Consul-General. 'Yes,' replied the men with glee, 'and we slew them every one!' Wherewith twelve monkey corpses were flung on the floor, and *Colobus kirki* joined the dodo, the auk, rhytina, and the moa in the limbo of species exterminated by man."

The only carnivorous mammal that man has done to death within historical times is the Antarctic wolf of the Falkland Islands. It was an exceptionally large wolf for such small islands, and the only other mammal indigenous to this area is a mouse which is still abundant there. The wolf preyed in the main on the feathered fauna of the islands, particularly on the wild geese which abounded, and continue to abound in the Falklands. But the animal was not averse to the penguins and the young seals when these were available.

This extinct wolf was first observed by European navigators in 1763-4, and a short time afterwards a war of extermination began. Darwin, who visited these islands during the celebrated voyage of the *Beagle*, forecasted the wolf's early extinction, and with reason. The hunting of the animal served to gratify the sporting instincts of the original settlers, and when the colonists commenced to utilise the new settlements as sheep-runs, its end was certain. The Antarctic wolf appears to have fled the earth in 1876, although a related species still survives on the neighboring shores of South America.

The ancestor of our common European cattle is also to be numbered with the dead. This animal, the aurochs or urus, is probably the only wild mammal that has been reduced to extinction in Europe throughout the period usually assigned to history and tradition.

Among the reptilia, a few only, and those confined to one group, have been led to the brink of extinction in recent times. We will deal with and dismiss these before reviewing the important avian animals which during the same period have been permitted to perish.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

GROWTH ESSENTIAL TO LIFE.

If the mind is artistic, it must not sit down in hopeless awe before the monuments of the great masters, as if heights so lofty could have no heaven beyond them. Still less must it tremble before the conventionalism of one age, when its mission may be to form the whole life of the age succeeding. No amount of erudition or mechanical skill or critical power can absolve the mind from the necessity of creating, if it would grow. The first condition of mental development is that the mind should be creative rather than acquisitive; or, as it has been well said, that intellectual food should go to make up mental muscle, and not mental fat. A mind that would grow must let no ideas become permanent except such as lead to action. Towards all others it must maintain an attitude of absolute receptivity; admitting all, being modified by all, but permanently biased by none. To become crystallised, fixed in opinion and mode of thought, is to lose the great characteristic of life. Propriety is the crystallisation of a race. And if we consider that a race, in proportion as it is plastic and capable of change, may be regarded as young and vigorous, while a race which is fixed, persistent in form, unable to change, is as surely effete, worn out, in peril of extinction, we shall see the immense importance to a nation of checking its conventionalities. The positive condition is that the mind should act rather than assimilate, that its attitude should be one of creation rather than of acquisition.—W. K. Clifford.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

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CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, Mr. Schaller, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.30, E. Bruce, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): W. Davidson, 11.30, "The Curse of Christianity"; 7.30, "What Infidels Have Done."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.30, Miss Kough, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.30, Mr. Hecht, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near Fountain): 3.30, Mr. Ratcliffe, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, J. Rowney, a Lecture.

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